

September



GARDENING CHECKLIST and garden tips

Though bits of summer linger on, it's time to begin preparing for the rigors of winter and thinking ahead to spring.

Town & Country's plant doctors are available during store hours to answer your gardening questions. For accurate diagnosis, bring in a sample (preferred) or a picture of the problem.

Vegetables

- Vegetables will stay fresher if you harvest them in the morning. Clean them as quickly as possible and refrigerate (except tomatoes which should not be refrigerated for best flavor).
- Harvest corn when the husk is tight over the ear and the silks are dried to a dark brown.
- Keep frost blankets handy for covering tomatoes and tender plants from early frosts.
- If staking tomato plants, tie new growth weekly. Remove all suckers (the new shoots that develop where each leaf meets the stem.) Begin pruning new growth and blossoms that won't have time to ripen before frost.
- Harvest onions. Cut top within an inch of bulb. Dry for 2 days in the sun, then a couple of weeks under a porch or carport. Store in mesh bags in a cool, dark, frost-free area.
- Remove spent vegetable plants. If they are free of insects and disease, compost the plants; otherwise dispose of them so they don't infect your plants and soil.

Flowers

- Plant spring flowering bulbs (daffodils, tulips, etc.) anytime in September or October. Fertilize when planting with **Dutch Bulb Food**.
- Sow wildflower seeds in late September through October for quicker blooming in spring .
- Plant fall-blooming perennials like asters, mums, and fall sedum for fall color.
- Pansies planted in early September will stay in bloom until the ground freezes. Mulch them for winter protection and they will be back in the spring as a companion for spring bulbs.
- Dig up summer flowering bulbs (gladiolas, begonias, and dahlias) once frost has killed or damaged the foliage.
- Divide iris, oriental poppies, bleeding heart, and daylilies. Share with your friends or replant in new spaces and water well.
- Continue to feed hanging baskets weekly with Fertilome Water Soluble 20-20-20 until frost.

Roses

- Discontinue feeding of roses. Also, refrain from cutting spent (or fresh) blossoms. Roses have a tendency to bloom until Thanksgiving. We need to do everything we can to slow their growth and blossoming and encourage them to "harden off" before winter.
- Don't winterize roses until after several hard frosts- typically late October or early November.

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Lawns

- Apply **Fertilome Weed-Out + Lawn Food** (Step 3 of our lawn program). This will kill broadleaf weeds that have germinated over the summer. Apply when temperatures aren't likely to rise above 80 degrees.
- As the days shorten and the weather cools you can begin reducing the frequency of lawn irrigation. Continue to water deeply, but less often. No more often than every third day in cooler weather, less frequently if possible.
- Early September is the best time of the year to plant new lawns. Quick germination, fewer weeds, and less frequent watering are all advantages to early fall planting. Be sure to use **T&C Seed & Sod Starter** for best results.

Fruit

- Either use or dispose of any apple fruit that drops. The dropped fruit can harbor insects that will harm next year's crop.
- Prop up fruit laden branches with boards or poles to keep branches from breaking.

Trees & Shrubs

- September is an ideal time to plant most trees and shrubs. Plants love the warm soil and cool air temperatures of September. Planting early in the fall allows the plant to root out into the native soil before the rigors of winter set in. Be sure to use **T&C Soil Enhancer** and **Fertilome Root Stimulator** when planting.
- Fall feeding of trees and shrubs can begin in late September or October when there is no danger of encouraging new growth before winter. Use **Save-A-Tree** or **T&C Tree & Shrub Food**.

Ponds

- Is your pond green? Use **Algae Fix** to get rid of green water and then treat with **Microbe Lift** regularly. These beneficial bacteria will help keep your pond clear.
- Check pumps and filters regularly to make sure they are clean and working properly.

General

- Compost everything! Vegetable remains, grass clippings, spent flowers and leaves. Turn compost piles regularly. Speed decomposition with **Hi-Yield Compost Maker**.
- Keep hummingbird feeders filled for the "hummers" as they migrate. But take down any hummingbird feeders before hard frost to prevent breakage.
- Clean out all bird feeders and houses and make any repairs before winter. Prepare to feed suet when weather turns cold.
- Spray around the foundation of your home with **Bifenthrin** or **Cyfluthrin** to keep hobo spiders from coming inside.
- Replace hobo spider traps inside your home.
- Now is a good time to test your soil for proper pH and nutrient level.

Always read and follow label directions when using any garden chemicals and fertilizers.

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